

MISCELLANEOUS.

DAVID J. WHITMER DEAD.

On June 14th, David J. Whitmer, son of David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, died at Richmond, Clay county, Missouri. His funeral took place from the family residence at 10 a. m., on June 16th, and the body was interred in the new cemetery at that place. David J. Whitmer received from his father and retained in his possession the manuscript from which the printers set the type for the first edition of the Book of Mormon—not the original manuscript in English, but the original transcript taken therefrom—printed in New York in 1829. The *Richmond Democrat* of June 15th, has an article relating thereto, under the heading: "The Original Transcript—The Origin of the Mormon Bible Owned by the Late David Whitmer," which is reproduced here. Much of it was published in the *News* at the time of David Whitmer's death, but in connection with the demise of his son will again prove interesting reading. The *Democrat* says:

In connection with the sad death of David J. Whitmer yesterday we republish an article which appeared in the *Democrat* in 1888 at the time of the death of David Whitmer, Sr., it being the last interview with that famous Mormon disciple. It is what he said just before his death in speaking of the origin of the Mormon Bible.

He was the last to go of the three witnesses to "the divine authenticity of the record of the Nephites," and as the history of this Book of Mormon is not much known, we think this a fitting occasion to repeat what Mr. Whitmer has often said on the subject, taken in part from an article written by Joe Johnson, of the *Plattsburg Democrat*. It is as follows:

When he was 24 years of age and working on his father's farm near Palmyra, New York, all that section of country was more or less excited over the reported discovery by Joseph Smith of the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. Oliver Cowdery, the village school teacher, mentioned the matter to him and announced his determination to visit Smith and investigate the matter for himself, promising Mr. Whitmer, at the latter's request, to advise him of the result. A few days later he received a letter from Cowdery, urging him to join him, which he did, being received by the "Prophet" with open arms. After remaining long enough to satisfy himself of the divine inspiration of Smith, the three returned to Whitmer's home, where it was agreed the work of translation should be prosecuted.

Shortly after his return, and while he was plowing in the field one afternoon, he was visited by Smith and Cowdery, who requested that he should accompany them into the woods on a hill across the road for the purpose of witnessing a manifestation that should qualify he and Cowdery to bear witness to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, Smith explaining that such procedure was in accordance with explicit instructions he had received from the angel of the Lord.

Repairing to the woods they engaged

in prayer for a short time, when suddenly a great light shone round about them far brighter and more dazzling than the brilliancy of the noon day sun, seemingly enveloping the wood for a considerable distance. A spirit of elevation seized him as of joy indescribable and a strange influence stole over him which so entranced him that he felt that he was chained to the spot. A moment later and a divine personage clothed in white raiment appeared unto them, and immediately in front of the personage stood a table on which lay a number of gold plates, some brass plates, the "Urim and Thummin" and the "sword of Laban." All of these they were directed to examine carefully and after their examination they were told that the Lord would demand that they bear witness thereof to all the world. These plates were engraved with characters termed in the Book of Mormon "reformed Egyptian," characters unknown to the linguists of the present day, which is claimed as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah:

"And the word of the Lord has become unto them as the leaves of a book which is sealed, and which is delivered unto him that is learned, saying: Read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed," etc.

A slip of paper containing a fact simple of these characters, traced by Joseph Smith, was submitted to the celebrated Professor Anthon and others and acknowledged their inability to translate them, recognizing in them characteristics of several ancient alphabets. This slip is still in Mr. Whitmer's possession and is cherished with the same sacred care that he bestows on the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, which he also has.

While describing this vision to us, all traces of a severe cold from which he was suffering disappeared for the time being, his form straightened, his countenance assumed almost a beatified expression and his tones became strangely eloquent. Although evidently no studied effort, the description was a magnificent piece of wood painting, and he carries his hearers with him to that lonely hill by the old farm and they stood there with him awed in the divine presence.

Skeptics may laugh and scoff if they will, but no man can listen to Mr. Whitmer as he talks of his interview with the angels of the Lord, without being most forcibly convinced that he has heard an honest man tell what he honestly believes to be true.

The result of this vision was a proclamation setting forth the facts enumerated.

The "Urim and Thummin" mentioned in the account of the vision were a pair of transparent stone spectacles. Smith would put on the spectacles, when a few words of the text of the Book of Mormon would appear on the lenses. When these were correctly transcribed by Cowdery, who acted as his amanuensis, these words would disappear and others take their place. When one hundred and sixteen pages were completed, Smith entrusted them to Martin Harris, to take to his home with a view to convert his family to the new faith. They were placed at night in a bureau drawer and next morning were missing, having

been stolen. They were never found and never replaced, so that the Book of Mormon today is short that number of pages of the original matter. As a chastisement for this carelessness, the Urim and Thummin was taken from Smith. But by humbling himself he again found favor with the Lord and was presented with a strange oval-shaped, chocolate colored stone about the size of an egg but more flat which it was promised should answer the same purpose. With this stone all the present book was translated. The Prophet would place the stone in a hat, then put his face in the hat and read the words that appeared thereon.

This stone is the only relic of the Prophet's work in existence which is not in possession of Mr. Whitmer. It was confided to Oliver Cowdery and preserved by him until his death in 1852. After that event Phineas Young succeeded in getting it from Cowdery's widow and it is now among the sacred relics preserved at Salt Lake City.

On Sunday evening at 6:30 January 22nd, 1888, Mr. Whitmer called his family and some friends to his bedside, and addressing himself to the attending physician, said: "Dr. Buchanan I want you to say whether or not I am in my right mind, before I give my dying testimony."

The doctor answered: "Yes you are in your right mind for I have just had a conversation with you."

He then addressed himself to all: "Now you must all be faithful in Christ. I want to say to you all the Bible and the record of Nephites, (Book of Mormon) is true, so you can say that you have heard me bear my testimony, on my death bed. All be faithful in Christ and your reward will be according to your works. God bless you all. My trust is in Christ forever, worlds without end. Amen."

EARN BIG SALARIES.

There is hardly one of the big men of the country—the presidents of railroads or heads of large corporations—who does not get a larger salary than the chief Magistrate of the United States.

Few of the big lawyers make less than \$50,000 a year in their practice. Insurance pays splendid salaries, and the presidents of the companies frequently have enormous incomes. Heads of trusts and big railroad corporations rule about the same. Religion pays fairly well, while art and literature make money in fits and starts.

But the law is where the big fees are made. John E. Parsons is said to have received \$250,000 for organizing the sugar trust. It is said he makes \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year. Bourke Cockran has made \$100,000 annually for some time. Roscoe Conkling made \$150,000 in one year, and when he died he left \$300,000 in fees uncollected. James C. Carter is another big money-making lawyer, and his fees amount to at least \$75,000 a year. David Bennett Hill is not a heavy money-making lawyer. He rarely made more than \$5000 a year in his Elmira home. But when Hill and Bacon got into the Fiske will case against the Cornell University they divided \$400,000. There are a large number of New York lawyers whose fees amount to more than \$50,000 a year regularly. Among these can be named Joseph H. Choate, Benjamin F. Tracy, Frederick R. Coudert,